

Book Reviews

Health Care of the Elderly. Essays in Old Age Medicine, Psychiatry, and Services. Edited by Tom Arie. 240 pp. Illust. The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1981. \$24 (US). ISBN 0-8018-2686-1

In many medical publications, authors are often compelled by stereotype or by tradition to present subject matter in a textbook format. Editor Tom Arie explains in his preface that the main concern of the "essays" in this "unstuffy book on very serious matter" is to catch the reader's interest. This aim is achieved.

The introductory essay leads the way. With the theme of "too frail a basket for so many eggs" Arie contemplates the end of life, noting that increasing age causes many changes but "extinguishes neither sensibilities nor suffering". Students are referred to some novels that express pertinent ideas and attitudes toward ageing.

Canada's latest census figures illustrate that the number of over-65s has increased at three times the rate of the general population. Health care services are already under pressure as dollars are scarcer. There is an urgent need to address this problem. J. Grimley Evans discusses the issue of institutional services. He points out that "the fear that care of the elderly is a bottomless hole into which any amount of resources could sink without significant effect is unjustified", and he maintains that "the problems of the hospital service in providing care for the elderly can be solved within finite resources".

The elderly have multiple problems, whose solutions are generally labour-intensive and therefore expensive. J. Williamson's chapter "Screening, surveillance and case-finding" addresses the issue of prevention. Case-finding should have great possibilities for prevention (and consequent cost-containment), but to date there is no conclusive evidence that this is so.

Dementing illness affects up to

10% of the over-65 population. David Jolley states that "dementia is coarse and bludgeoning in its destruction and shameless in its demand for service of the crudest, most engulfing kind" and pleads for direction of resources to modes of care known to be successful.

K. Shulman, who trained in Britain, describes the application of British principles of service innovations in geriatric psychiatry to a Canadian setting. Graham Mulley looks at the rehabilitation process. He ponders the results for both the rehabilitation team and the client of stimulating morale and motivation as against applying specialized techniques. K. Bergman discusses psychotherapy for the elderly, and Bernard Isaacs explores the timely issue of geriatrics as a speciality.

"Health Care of the Elderly" is clearly written and relevant to physicians who would benefit by provocative thinking on the issues.

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Lithium and Manic Depression: a Guide. John Bohn and James W. Jefferson. 32 pp. Lithium Information Center, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, 1982. 1 to 10 copies, \$3 (US); more than 10 copies, \$2; large bulk purchase, prices available on request; paper-bound.

This 32-page booklet on lithium is clearly written and comprehensive. It answers briefly such important questions as Does lithium cure manic-depressive disorders? How does lithium work? How rapidly does it work? Why are blood tests necessary? How can persistent side effects be dealt with?

Even more useful are answers to problems that most doctors do not know how to address: how lithium should be stored, what to do if a

dose is forgotten, and what to do about alcohol, special diets, other medications, surgery and pregnancy. There is an interesting discussion about whether the patient can remain slightly manic (most want to, it seems) while taking lithium.

Some of the information does not apply to Canada. Slow-release lithium and lithium citrate syrup are not available in this country. Otherwise, this booklet is a welcome addition to the monographs available through hospital pharmacies and through the manufacturers. Patients and their families need as much information as possible on the purposes and problems of prescribed drugs.

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Infectious Diseases and Antimicrobial Agents/2, Human Herpesvirus Infections. Clinical Aspects. Edited by Ronald Glaser and Tamar Gotlieb-Stematsky. 280 pp. Illust. Marcel Dekker, Inc., New York, 1982. \$35 (US). ISBN 0-8247-1536-5

This work is divided into six chapters: "Herpes simplex infections", "Human cytomegalovirus infections", "Varicella-zoster infections, chickenpox (varicella) and shingles (zoster)", "Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) and infectious mononucleosis", "Association of Epstein-Barr virus with neurologic diseases" and "Therapy and prevention of human infection due to herpesviruses".

The content varies from excellent to poor. There is a good deal of overlap on treatment, clinical features and laboratory diagnosis. Although the chapter on herpes simplex infections is supported by 385 references, only one 1980 reference (an abstract) is given. Some important clinical situations are given short shrift: herpes simplex encephalitis is discussed in a mere 16 lines, and neonatal herpes receives a meagre 17-line description. In the section on virus diagnosis the use of rabbit eye or suckling mice inocula-